UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1996/103
3 October 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Resumed substantive session of 1996
New York, 10 October and 13 and
14 November 1996
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Theme for the high-level segment of the substantive session of 1997 of the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 50/227, the General Assembly decided that, with regard to the theme for the general debate of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, "the President of the Council, following consultations with Member States and, through the Secretary-General, with the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, should present a proposal for a topical theme for the following year at the annual substantive session of the Council. At such session, the Council shall undertake consultations on the theme for the high-level segment with a view to reaching a decision, if possible, during the substantive session, but not later than at a resumed session in the autumn following the annual session." The present note is submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution 50/227 and at the request of the President of the Council, to facilitate his consultations with Member States. Hence, it does not include any proposals by delegations.

I. PROPOSALS OF ORGANS, ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

2. The Secretary-General consulted the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system through a letter dated 23 July 1996, as a result of which he received the following proposals for a theme:

---

* E/1996/93.

(a) The future of multilateralism;

(b) The social dimension of globalization;

(c) Topical theme closely related to activities carried out as a follow-up to recent major United Nations conferences, in particular with regard to the social obligations of Member States as well as those of the organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) Financing of technical cooperation for development;

(e) Technical cooperation and investment promotion in the development of agro-processing capabilities and capacities;

(f) The role of transport infrastructure for development;

(g) Energy and sustainable development in relation to the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly on Agenda 21;

(h) Post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(i) The interactions between poverty, health and development.

II. PROPOSALS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES

3. It may be recalled that the Council was requested by the Fourth World Conference on Women 1/ and by the General Assembly 2/ to devote one high-level segment, one coordination segment and one operational activities segment to gender before 2000. In the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), it was stated that the Council "may consider dedicating one high-level segment before 2001 to human settlements and the implementation of the Habitat agenda". 3/ The Council was also requested by the Commission on Human Rights to examine the issue of the right to development at one of its high-level segments 4/. In the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Council was requested to devote part of its high-level segment to the implementation of the New Agenda before the General Assembly conducted the final review and assessment of the implementation of the New Agenda in the year 2000.

III. THEME SUGGESTED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

4. In selecting the theme for its high-level segment, the Council may take into account the following considerations:

(a) The Council may choose a major economic and/or social policy theme of topical interest;

(b) The theme should allow for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach;

(c) The theme should enable the Council to receive the maximum benefit from ministerial participation and from the presence of heads of agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions;

(d) The deliberations of the high-level segment should provide political impetus for building areas of convergence and facilitate the consideration of the issues in question, including the emergence of new recommendations on the issues (General Assembly resolution 45/264, annex, para. 5 (d) (i)).

5. In paragraph 152 of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication (E/1996/61), it was recommended that the Council consider selecting suitable themes for its high-level and coordination segments on an enabling environment. In paragraph 51 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, it is stated that the Council should discuss issues of the enabling national and international environment in the economic, social and related fields, including the mobilization of resources.

6. In the light of the above and of the proposals made by organizations of the United Nations system, it is suggested that the Council take up the following theme for the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1997: "The enabling national and international environment". This is a sufficiently broad theme of topical interest, around which consensus-building is desirable. It will enable all Member States to address critical matters related to the enabling environment, bring their respective perspectives together and enrich the debate.

7. The suggested theme reflects both the economic and social aspects of development and their interrelationships, as well as national and international perspectives and their interdependence, and addresses the question of opportunities and challenges arising from the twin processes of globalization and liberalization, which have increasingly been receiving the attention of Governments and civil society. The subject would be of particular importance to all countries, since an enabling environment can no longer be designed and put in place by individual countries in isolation. The theme is also one of the cross-cutting themes that arise from the outcome of recent major international conferences.

Notes

1/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20 and Add.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, paras. 313-315.

2/ General Assembly resolution 50/203, para. 23.

3/ A/CONF.165/L.6/Add.9, para. 164; the preliminary version of the report of the Conference is to be issued in document A/CONF.165/14.

4/ The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1995/17 on the right to development, recommended that the Economic and Social Council dedicate, as early as possible, the high-level segment of one of its substantive sessions to evaluating the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development within the United Nations system, including the work of the international financial institutions and other specialized agencies Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A).